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Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 109336 TOSEC 040270
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY H:JBATWOOD:PMPCLAPP
APPROVED BY H - J. BRIAN ATWOOD
S/S - PETER TARNOFF
- MRS. BENSON
PM - LESLIE GELB
----------132206Z 112473 /61
O 132114Z MAY 77 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 109336 TOSEC 040270

NODIS
FOR SPIEGEL FROM GELB AND BENNET

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: F-16 COPRODUCTION IN ISRAEL

REF: (A) TOSEC 40226, (B) SECTO 04070, (C) STATE 107343

FREED CHARACTERIZATION OF DEPARTMENT'S EFFORT AS "ALL-OUT LOBBYING BATTLE" INCORRECT. LUCY BENSON DID SOUND OUT MEMBERS OF SFRC BUT NO OTHER ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN SINCE ADMINISTRATION POSITION NOT AGREED UNTIL LATE WEDNESDAY (MAY 11). POSITION WAS PRESENTED TO KEY MEMBERS THURSDAY MORNING AS REPORTED IN REFTEL.

JAVITS HAD STEPPED OUT OF WHITE HOUSE MEETING DURING DISCUSSION OF COPRODUCTION ISSUE. AS A CONSEQUENCE, HE WENT AHEAD WITH AN AMENDMENT ON F-16'S AT SENATE FOREIGN
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RELATIONS COMMITTEE MARKUP ONLY TO BE INTERRUPTED BY THE AMENDMENT'S COSPONSOR, FRANK CHURCH, WHO REQUESTED A PRIVATE CONFERENCE. ASSURED BY CHURCH THAT THE AGREE-MENT REACHED EARLIER RE COPRODUCTION WAS SATISFACTORY, HE REWORDED HIS AMENDMENT AS FOLLOWS:

"IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HISTORIC SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BE-

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TWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL AND PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS UNDERTAKEN, THE CONGRESS JOINS WITH THE PRESIDENT IN RE-AFFIRMING THAT A POLICY OF RESTRAINT IN U.S. ARMS TRANSFERS, INCLUDING ARMS SALES CEILINGS, SHALL NOT IMPAIR ISRAEL'S DETERRENT STRENGTH OR UNDERMINE THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST."

AS PER REFTEL, THE PRESIDENT MADE A COMMITMENT TO CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS THAT HE WOULD RESOLVE ANY UNNECESSARY DELAYS IN COPRODUCTION LICENSE APPROVALS FOR ISRAEL, INCLUDING THOSE ON F-16 AND CHARIOT TANKS. FYI: THE LICENSE DELAY ON THE CHARIOT TANK COMPONENTS RESULTED FROM ISRAELI DELAYS IN PROCESSING DOCUMENTS. END FYI.

IT WAS ALSO AGREED BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS THAT THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE WOULD BE ADDED TO THE P.D. ON ARMS TRANSFER POLICY:

-- (ON PAGE 1) "THE UNITED STATES WILL REMAIN FAITHFUL TO ITS TREATY OBLIGATIONS AND WILL ALSO HONOR ITS HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING ISRAEL'S SECURITY."

-- (ON PAGE 2 AT THE END OF THE SENTENCE LEADING INTO THE NUMBERED GUIDELINES) ". . . OR EXCEPT WHERE I DETERMINE THAT COUNTRIES FRIENDLY TO THE UNITED STATES MUST DEPEND ON ADVANCED WEAPONRY TO OFFSET QUANTITATIVE AND OTHER DISADVANTAGES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A REGIONAL BALANCE, I DIRECT THAT: . . ."

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WITH REGARD TO THE F-16 CASE, THE NET EFFECT OF THE PRESIDENT'S DISCUSSIONS WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS WILL PROBABLY BE TO FOCUS OUR ATTENTION SOONER ON THE QUESTIONS OF WHETHER AND TO WHAT EXTENT WE CAN BECOME INVOLVED IN F-16 COPRODUCTION WITH ISRAEL.

CHRISTOPHER

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